

Overcoming the fear of death & illness



Dr. Muhammad Abu Rahim

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2002: First Edition.

Translated by Umar Kassler.
Typeset by Abu Ruqayyah
Cover design by Halil Ozturk

ISBN 1 874263 02 8

Published and Distributed by:

Al-Firdous Ltd
10 Fonthill Road
London
N4 3HX

www.al-firdous.co.uk

Email: books@al-firdous.co.uk

Printed in England by
Deluxe Printers, 245-a, Acton Lane,
Park Royal, London NW10 7NR
Tel : 020 8965 1771

Table of Contents

Preface	4
1. Definition of Fear	6
1.1 - The word 'Fear' in Arabic	6
1.2 - Significance of Fear	6
2. The Instinct of Fear	10
2.1 - Fear is an Acquired Temporary Condition	10
2.2 - Fear is an Inborn Condition	10
3. Causes of Fear	13
4. Degrees and Symptoms of Fear	15
4.1 - Degrees of Fear	15
4.2 - Symptoms of Fear	16
4.3 - The Effect of Fear as Displayed by the Qur'an	17
5. Comparison Between Fear of Allah and Fear of Created Things	19
6. Fear of Death	22
6.1 - Definition of Fear of Death	22
6.2 - Causes of Fear of Death	22
6.3 - Methods of Treatment	23
7. Fear of Sickness	34
7.1 - Definition	34
7.2 - Symptoms	34
7.3 - Causes of Fear of Sickness	35
7.4 - Fear of Sickness: disease of the present time	35
7.5 - Methods of Treatment	37
A Message from the Publisher	48
Staying up at Night and Prayer	49

Preface

All praise is due to Allah. We praise Him, seek His Aid and ask for His Forgiveness. We seek Allah's Refuge from the evils of ourselves and from the evil of our actions. Whomsoever Allah guides none can lead astray, and whomsoever Allah leads astray none can guide. I testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah ﷻ Alone, having no partners, and I testify that Muhammad ﷺ is His Slave and Messenger.

Fear is a natural disposition concealed within the human soul. It grows in certain circumstances and dies if treated properly and at the right time. Fear thrives on uncertainty and imagination, and is often triggered by shock. Therefore, the only way to restrain these triggers of fear is to deal with them appropriately.

In fact, fear is not something shameful or unnatural, but the problem begins when a person brags that he is not afraid of anything. A brave man is not the one who claims he is not afraid of anything, but the one who acts as if he is not afraid. Many people, who suffer from real or imaginary fears, do so for various reasons, depending on environmental, physical and psychological factors. Therefore, positive guidance is vital in alleviating the effects of these fears.

In this booklet, I have discussed two real kinds of fear: **Fear of Death** and **Fear of Sickness**. I have tried to diagnose them and prescribe the appropriate treatment for them from an Islamic perspective. I have relied on the Qur'an and the Sunnah and used some of the advice of psychiatrists, whose

methods have proved effective in easing the effect of these two **Fears**, without contradicting the Qur'an and Sunnah.

I have come to the conclusion that Islam does not conflict with the tremendous efforts and studies of many psychiatrists in diagnosing and treating disease.

The booklet consists of seven subjects:

- 1- the definition and significance of fear
- 2- the instinct of fear
- 3- the causes of fear
- 4- degrees and symptoms of fears
- 5- comparison between fear of Allah and fear of created things
- 6- fear of death
- 7- fear of sickness

I ask Allah ﷻ to accept my humble work and to use this booklet to help bring peace and tranquillity to human souls. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the World.

1. Definition of Fear

1.1 - The word 'Fear' in Arabic

The Arabic word "*Al-Khawf*", meaning 'to fear', means being afraid, frightened and scared. Allah ﷻ says, **﴿it is only Satan that suggests to you the fear of his partisans﴾**¹, meaning that Satan makes you be afraid and scared of his partisans, and **﴿remember your Lord by your tongue and within yourself, humbly and with fear﴾**².

Fear can also mean killing and fighting. Al-Lihyani interpreted the word **Fear** in Allah's verse **﴿and certainly, We shall test you with something of fear and hunger﴾**³ as, killing and fighting, and **﴿and if any tidings, whether of safety or fear, come unto them, they make it known﴾**⁴ where fear is interpreted as killing.

1.2 - Significance of Fear

Scholars have different opinions with regard to the meaning of fear.

¹ Al-Imran: Verse: 175.

² Al-A'raf: Verse: 205.

³ Al-Baqarah: Verse: 155.

⁴ An-Nisa': Verse: 83.

a. Some have defined it as an existing instinct in the human mind; a natural, inborn and innate emotion which both humans and animals are endowed with.⁵ Therefore, Fear is an inherited innate phenomenon that exists in the psychical constitution of living creatures.

b. Some have defined it with regard to its causes. Ibn al-Qayyim said: "Fear is the ability to know the course of rules, and this is the cause of fear and not fear itself."⁶

c. Some have defined it with respect to its causes and effects. Imam Al-Ghazali said: "Fear means the sensation of pain of the heart because one expects certain harm or misfortune to befall one in the future."⁷ Ibn al-Qayyim said: "Fear is the disturbance and motion of the heart when it remembers the cause of fear." The trouble of the heart is an effect and the remembrance of the cause of fear is the cause. Ibn al-Qayyim also said: "Fear is the escape of the heart from trouble when it flares up."⁸

In the 'Encyclopaedia of Psychology,' fear is defined as: "An anxiety related to something, or an idea, or it is a mental outcome emanating from specific circumstances during the first stage of a human life."⁹

d. Others have defined fear with regard to its effects and claimed that it is linked with perception (mind) and body, while others have stated that it is a reaction linked with self-preservation.

⁵ See: "*Al-Murshid an-Nafsi' Ila al-Hayaat as-Sawiyyah*" (197).

⁶ "*Madarij as-Salikin*", (1/512).

⁷ "*Ihya' Ulum ad-Din*", 4/155.

⁸ "*Madarij as-Salikin*", (1/512).

⁹ Encyclopaedia of Psychology: 2/132,135.

There is no difference between the two definitions as far as the content is concerned, because self-preservation is one of the key psychological urges of a living being, and anything which stimulates these urges produces a reaction as it passes through the system of perception.

In a book called, "The Fear of Children", fear is defined as: "a basic reaction linked strongly with the preservation of one's life."¹⁰

In a book called, "Military Psychology", fear is defined as "a reaction strongly linked with the mind and especially with the perception.And the body".¹¹

In a book called, "The Psychological Problems of the Child", fear is defined as "a common reaction among children and it takes many forms".¹²

On the other hand, the author of "The Encyclopaedia of Psychology" has excluded fear from the fact that it is linked with the mind; he said: "Fear is a nervous anxiety or a psychological punishment which is not linked with the mind, and it befalls human unruly, because it is an unusual fear in the human soul which is difficult to control or restrain."¹³

Imam al-Ghazali said: "The state of fear can be divided into: knowledge, state and action. Knowledge is the fact that one is aware of the cause which leads to some harm or discomfort. As an example, if a person commits an offence against a king

¹⁰ "The Fear of Children", p.14.

¹¹ "Military Psychology", p.93.

¹² "The Psychological Problems of the Child", p.132.

¹³ "The Encyclopaedia of Psychology", p.109.

and falls into his hand, he becomes afraid of being killed by the king. There is a possibility that he might be forgiven and escape punishment, but his heart is still distressed and filled with fear, according to the extent of his knowledge of the causes leading to his killing. That is, according to the monstrosity of his crime, because the king is furious and seeks revenge and his entourage pushes him to take his revenge. He cannot even get someone to intercede with the king on his behalf and he has no other means of making the king forgive his crime. Therefore, his knowledge of all these motives has led to his fear and to his heart being troubled. The less these motives of fear are, the less fear he feels."¹⁴

Our aim in enumerating the various definitions of fear is to know the limit of fear; and we can see at a glance that they all have clear meanings in depicting fear as it is and its effects and causes.

In short, fear is a natural disposition linked with the mind and appears in various guises for various causes.

¹⁴ "Ihya' Ulum ad-Din", 4/152.

2. The Instinct of Fear

2.1 - Fear is an Acquired Temporary Condition

One psychological researcher reached the conclusion that fear comes as a result of specific circumstances during the first stage of a person's life. Therefore, if these circumstances did not come about, fear would not occur. In his research, he studied the factors which led to fear by relating fear and its mental accumulation to trauma suffered by the child during birth and afterwards.

He then went on to explain the many cases of fear of confined spaces and gas masks. He attributed that to a partial suffocation caused by covering directly after birth, or children being born blue because of suffocation caused by the umbilical cord. He came to the conclusion that without these factors the baby would start its life normally, without fear.¹⁵

The research carried out by this scientist from his personal experiments implies that fear is an acquired temporary condition.

2.2 - Fear is an Inborn Condition

The result reached by the above scientist is far from being correct. Fear is an inborn condition, and if that were not the case, the child would not have any feeling of fear during childhood. If a child feels some physical distress, he will take some action to show that he is not comfortable, such as crying

¹⁵ Encyclopaedia of Psychology: 132,133.

and moving his hands and feet. Similarly, if he hears something unusual, he will shake and cry, as if to say: 'I am afraid, protect me.'¹⁶

And since fear is a natural disposition deep in human nature, the experiences, which human beings encounter from childhood, have a crucial role in affecting and stimulating this instinct in the psychological constitution of the human.

Muslim Scholars have realised this and stated that human beings are inclined to fear by instinct. They have confirmed this statement from Allah's ﷻ verse, **«Verily, man was created anxious»**¹⁷ and the Prophet's ﷺ Hadith: "The worst things that a man can be given are: alarming niggardliness and unrestrained cowardice."¹⁸

Therefore, fear is a natural disposition and no one is exempt from it at any time. It is a natural force, which is required to protect the human species.

So, if fear is one of the natural dispositions of a human being, it is innate and there is no hope in rooting it out, but we should deal with it properly. The home, society and individual experience have a major effect in alleviating or aggravating the burden of this instinct. This leads us to be absolutely certain that fear is not uniform; that is, people differ with regard to the effect of fear, according to the environmental, physical and psychological factors which they undergo.¹⁹

¹⁶ "The Fear of Children", p.15.

¹⁷ *Al-Ma'arij*: Verse: 19.

¹⁸ Narrated by Abu Dawud: 21, Imam Ahmed: 2/302-320 and Albani classified it as Sahih in his "*Sahih al-Ja'mi*": 56.

¹⁹ See: "*At-Tarbiyyah Fi al-Islam*", p.147 and "The Psychological Problems of the Child", p.142.

Fear is not a disgraceful or unnatural feeling. The shame lies when a person brags that he is not afraid of anything. A brave man is not the one who claims he is not afraid of anything, but the one who acts as if he is not afraid. By nature, the human being is exposed to fear, and tranquillity and peace are a new condition, which eases the pressure of fear.²⁰ Allah ﷻ says, showing His Graciousness to His Slaves, **﴿So let them worship the Lord of this House (Ka'bah), Who has fed them against hunger, and has made them safe from fear﴾**²¹ The Prophet ﷺ used to make this supplication, "O Allah! I seek refuge with you from cowardice".²²

²⁰ "The Psychology of Fear", 2.

²¹ *Quraish*: Verse, 3-4.

²² Narrated by al-Bukhari, 36-37 and Muslim, 49-51.

3. Causes of Fear

Although fear is hereditary and inborn, its effect of stimulation varies from one kind of physique to another. People with disabilities are more susceptible to activating hereditary and acquired fears, because they are born with weak nervous systems, which cause them to be in constant fear or in a position to be upset by insignificant things.²³

One scientist has discussed his experiment and talked about the circumstances that lead a human being to fear. Some of these are conditions which affect mothers during pregnancy and others are the condition of the baby during pregnancy and immediately after birth.²⁴

However, it is generally known that a human's acquisition of the causes of fear have an influence in preparing the child for exposure to fear, and this starts from childhood. Also, the constant occurrence of these causes has an influence in reinforcing fear in the human psyche.

Fear, therefore, is stimulated by the existence and awareness of an external danger. The human being expects an unknown and mysterious future, and this leaves him prey to worry and uncertainty, which are two breeding grounds of fear. Therefore, the element of shock is the most dangerous cause to stimulate latent fear. Allah ﷻ says, describing the state of Moses ﷺ when his stick becomes a snake, **﴿and throw your stick! But when he saw it moving as if it were a snake, he turned in flight, and did not look back﴾**²⁵,

²³ "The Psychology of Fear", 16.

²⁴ *Encyclopaedia of Psychology*: 132.

²⁵ *An-Naml*: Verse: 10.

Allah ﷻ also says, describing Satan in the battle of Badr, when Satan saw the Angels coming down to support the believers, **(but when the two forces came in sight of each other, he ran away and said: "Verily, I have nothing to do with you. Verily! I see what you see not. Verily! I fear Allah for Allah is Severe in punishment.")**²⁶

The activities carried out by the imagination and fantasy is one of the causes of treason and fear in military battles, therefore, fantasy is one of the causes of losing wars.²⁷

²⁶ Al-Anfal: Verse: 48.

²⁷ "Ad-Daka' Wal-Qiyam Fi al-Harb", 120-121.

4. Degrees and Symptoms of Fear

4.1 - Degrees of Fear

We do not have a special measure to measure the degree of fear as we measure temperature in the human body. However, some psychologists have identified two degrees of fear: normal and the other is abnormal and unnatural. They have included in each degree particular features, which distinguish them from the other.

Normal fear is generated by some circumstances and stimuli, which threaten human life, pushing a person to avoid any source of fear and damage. This kind of fear is natural and essential to protect the individual and encourages him towards positive action and behaviour.

As for abnormal fear, it is a disease that drives a person towards despair and depression. This is caused by the recurrence of an extreme and severe stimulus, whereby the fear, or phobia, becomes a psychological complex that requires diagnosing, examining, curing and protecting the individual from its causes.²⁸

Therefore, fear is nothing to be ashamed of, because it is a natural disposition. If someone who is afraid tries to conceal his fear, the signs and impressions of fear will appear, either in the form of visible symptoms in the body, or in the heart, where they are manifested as invisible reactions.

²⁸ "The Psychological Problems of the Child", p. 132-133, "Ihya' Ulum ad-Din", 4/155 and "Madarij as-Salikin", 1/55.

Psychologists and scientists have realised that fear reflections strike the nervous system of the brain and the organic brain, which is formed from all the psychomotor centres, the sources of imitation, imagination and reactions, and the psychic brain –the system of balance and the centre of intelligence and will.

Freud thinks that fear or anxiety is the cause of all nervous problems; and as a result, fear becomes the cause of most nervous disorders and individual and social misbehaviour.²⁹

4.2 - Symptoms of Fear

Fear appears on the features of the face, such as widening of the pupils, sweating, biting of the tongue, etc. Fear also affects the colour of the skin and causes it to become pale, rather than red, and sometimes this paleness may turn to blue.

Fear appears in the form of exertion, weakness and involuntary shivering or urinating, and during sleep, the body curls up and loses the ability to control the faculty of speech, hence, becomes dumb. The person, under fear, feels that his throat is dry, and this may cause him to have a speech impediment and so he may start crying.

As for the internal changes in the body, his heartbeat becomes fast, blood pressure is high, and speed of and difficulty in breathing can increase.

As for one's mental and emotional condition, there may be weakness of intelligence, memory and thinking, indecision, a lack of awareness of those around, and even a loss of confidence in them and oppression of those weaker.

²⁹ See: "The Psychological Problems of the Child", p. 132.

There is no doubt that there are certain conscious expressive means that a person may resort to, such as speech, writing or escape, or trying to convince the other person to compromise, or imploring him or threatening him with weapons. Fear may also be expressed unconsciously through such means as drawing, sculpturing, poetry, acting or a desire to join a group.

4.3 - The Effect of Fear as Displayed by the Qur'an

Allah ﷻ says, describing the effect of fear on the human being: **﴿Behold! They came on you from above you and from below you and behold the eyes became dim and the hearts gaped up to the throats and you imagined various (vain) thoughts about Allah! In that situation were the Believers tried: they were shaken as by a tremendous shaking. And behold! The Hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease (even) say: "Allah and His Messenger promised us nothing but delusion!" Behold! A party among them said: "You men of Yathrib! You cannot stand (the attack)! Therefore go back!" and a band of them ask for leave of the Prophet saying "Truly our houses are bare and exposed" though they were not exposed: they intended nothing but to run away﴾**³⁰

And again, He ﷻ says, **﴿Then when fear comes you will see them looking to you, their eyes revolving like (those of) one over whom hovers death: but when the fear is past they will smite you with sharp tongues covetous of goods. Such men have no faith and so Allah has made their deeds of none effect﴾**³¹

³⁰ Al-Ahzaab: Verses: 10-13.

³¹ Al-Ahzaab: Verses: 19.

And He ﷻ also says, **«Just as your Lord ordered you out of your house in truth even though a party among the believers disliked it. Disputing with you concerning the truth after it was made manifest as if they were being driven to death and they (actually) saw it»**³², and **«Remember He covered you with a sort of drowsiness to give you calm as from Himself and He caused rain to descend on you from heaven to clean you therewith to remove from you the stain of Satan to strengthen your hearts and to plant your feet firmly therewith»**³³

Therefore, if you want to know if a person is afraid, look carefully at his face, his features, skin colour and the movements of his body; listen to his heartbeat, the inflection of his voice and his breathing; examine his intelligence, memory, and his thoughts and see if they are regular or not; and check his feeling, emotions and his determination; if you see any unusual behaviour, you will know that that person is being attacked by fear.

³² Al-Anfaal: Verses: 5-6.

³³ Al-Anfaal: Verses: 11.

5. Comparison Between Fear of Allah and Fear of Created Things

If a person fears created things, because they are always associated with death, and, by nature, human beings strive for survival; it is more appropriate that he should fear Allah, the Creator of all these creations, instead of other created things. As Allah ﷻ says, **«Do you fear them? Nay it is Allah whom you should more justly fear if you believe!»**³⁴, because of the following reasons:

a. The worst thing that fear of created things can lead to is death. However, this does not mean extinction, but a transition from one particular life to another with different characteristics and factors. Allah ﷻ says, **«Then when fear comes you will see them looking to you, their eyes revolving like (those of) one over whom hovers death»**³⁵ and **«They say: “What! When we are reduced to bones and dust should we really be raised up (to be) a new creation?” Say: “(Nay!) be you stones or iron “Or created matter which in your minds is hardest (to be raised up)--(yet shall you be raised up!)” Then will they say: “Who will cause us to return?” Say: “He Who created you first!”»**³⁶

b. The scope of worldly fears does not go beyond the first stage of a human being's life, that is, the worldly life. When a

³⁴ At-Tawbah: Verse: 13.

³⁵ Al-Ahzaab: Verses: 19.

³⁶ Al-Israa: Verses: 49-51.

person dies, all his worry and fears die too and they will have no effect on his physical or spiritual feelings.

c. Fear of created things impels people to run away from them; on the other hand, fear of Allah urges them to flee to Allah; Allah ﷻ says, **﴿Hasten you then (at once) to Allah: I am from Him a warner to you clear and open﴾**³⁷

d. Fear of Allah ﷻ is prompted by fear of His Punishment, Allah ﷻ says, **﴿they hope for His Mercy and fear His Punishment﴾**³⁸

Allah's Punishment is severe because:

1. There is no one like Him, He ﷻ has no partner and He has full control over all His creation, Allah ﷻ says, **﴿so on that Day, none will punish as He will punish. And none will bind as He will bind﴾**³⁹.

2. He ﷻ is Eternal, Allah ﷻ says, **﴿But those who reject (Allah) for them will be the Fire of Hell: no term shall be determined for them so they should die nor shall its Penalty be lightened for them: thus do We reward every ungrateful one!﴾**⁴⁰

and He ﷻ says **﴿As for those who are disbeliever abode will be the Fire, every time they wish to get away therefrom, they will be forced thereinto, and it will be said to them: "Taste you the torment of the Fire which you used to deny﴾**⁴¹.

³⁷ Az-Zariyaat: Verse: 50.

³⁸ Al-Israa: Verses: 57.

³⁹ Al-Fajr: Verses: 25-26.

⁴⁰ Fatir: Verse, 36.

⁴¹ As-Sajdah: Verse, 20.

This comparison between the fear of Allah and fear of created things is a very effective antidote to fear.

To help human beings become fear-free, they need to keep remembering Allah ﷻ, fulfil His Shari'ah Law, and perform all the duties He ﷻ has commanded. Allah ﷻ says, **﴿Those who believe and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah, for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction﴾**⁴², and **﴿Verily those who say "Our Lord is Allah" and remain firm (on that Path) on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve﴾**⁴³

He ﷻ also says, **﴿Truly man was created very impatient. Fretful when evil touches him. And niggardly when good reaches him, except those devoted to Prayer. Those who remain steadfast to their prayer; and those in whose wealth is a recognized right. For the (needy) who asks and him who is prevented (for some reason from asking); and those who hold to the truth of the Day of Judgment; and those who fear the displeasure of their Lord. For their Lord's displeasure is the opposite of Peace and Tranquility. And those who guard their chastity, except with their wives and the (captives) whom their right hands possess for (then) they are not to be blamed. But those who trespass beyond this are transgressors. And those who respect their trusts and covenants; and those who stand firm in their testimonies; and those who guard (the sacredness) of their worship. Such will be the honored ones in the Gardens of (Bliss)﴾**⁴⁴

⁴² Ar-Ra'd: Verse, 28.

⁴³ Al-Ahqaf: Verse, 13.

⁴⁴ Al-Ma'arij: Verses, 19-35.

6. Fear of Death

6.1 - Definition of Fear of Death

Fear of death is a disease which befalls human beings and makes them fear death in general. Some of the symptoms derived from fear of death are fear of being buried alive, and the sight of blood and dead bodies. Anyone suffering from this disease (fear of death) avoids the sight of these symptoms and avoids taking part in the burial process and funerals. He even feels afraid to mention death, because it is associated with the reality of death and evokes a harmful experience in the human psyche.

Psychologists have distinguished between this kind of fear and anxiety of death, which they have defined as a person's fear of his own death.⁴⁵ In fact, Allah ﷻ has described such people, saying, **﴿they thrust their fingers in their ears to keep out the stunning thunder-clap for fear of death. But Allah ever encompasses the disbelievers﴾**⁴⁶ and **﴿did you not think of those who went forth from their homes in thousands, fearing Allah?﴾**⁴⁷

6.2 - Causes of Fear of Death

If you ask any one about the cause of his/her fear of death, the answer will usually involve the following reasons:

1. Mystery of the reality of death.
2. Feeling of guilt from sins and evil deeds.

⁴⁵ Encyclopaedia of Psychology, 110, 113, 119.

⁴⁶ Al-Baqarah: Verse, 19.

⁴⁷ Al-Baqarah: Verse, 243.

3. Separation from beloved ones, desires and hopes
4. Decomposition of the body and loss of social and moral value, and the transformation of the body into something terrible and repulsive.⁴⁸

6.3 - Methods of Treatment

6.3.1 - Introduction

A complete treatment of fear is impossible, because, as aforementioned, fear is an inborn condition. Therefore, the purpose of the treatment is to alleviate the feeling of fear and to free human beings from all the psychological pains caused by death.

Since the above causes of fear of death are the most common, it is important to analyse these causes and explain them in order to eliminate them from the mind of the person stricken by fear, and then move on to the positive stage; that is, facing the idea of death with pleasure and acceptance.

6.3.2 - Let us ask ourselves: Is death part of life? In other words, can we escape death?

The answer is self-evident. Nobody can deny that death is inevitable and every living being will die. Allah ﷻ says, **﴿every soul shall have a taste of death, in the end to Us shall you be brought back﴾**⁴⁹

⁴⁸ "The Psychology of Fear", 28-243 and Encyclopaedia of Psychology, 138.

⁴⁹ Al-Ankabut: Verse, 57.

And **﴿Say: "Running away will not profit you if you are running away from death or slaughter">﴾**⁵⁰

And again, **﴿ Say: "Verily, the Death from which you flee will truly meet you">﴾**⁵¹

Therefore, since that is the case, why do I have to be afraid of death? Is it because it denotes extinction, or is it rather a passage from the life of this world to another life?

Atheists and materialists assert that the material universe is eternal; Allah ﷻ says, with regard to them, **﴿there is nothing but our life of this world! We die and we live! And we are not going to be resurrected﴾**⁵² This is a limited vision because it relies on the senses in looking into existential criteria. This opinion is refuted because it puts human beings into the same category as other living creatures, so what is the benefit of creating this human being?

If you are one of those atheist materialists, then you have the right to fear death. However, there is strong rational evidence that there is life after death, because a human being is unique in his physical, mental, spiritual and psychological constitution and differs from all other creatures. Allah ﷻ says, **﴿Verily We have honoured the children of Adam﴾**⁵³, and: **﴿and they say: "This is nothing but evident magic! When we are dead and have become dust and bones, shall we then be resurrected? And also our fathers of old?" Say: "Yes, and you shall then be humiliated."﴾**⁵⁴ and:

⁵⁰ Al-Ahzab: Verse, 16.

⁵¹ Al-Jumu'ah: Verse, 8.

⁵² Al-Mu'minun: Verse, 37.

⁵³ Al-Israa': Verse, 70.

⁵⁴ As-Saffat: Verses, 15-18.

﴿and this life of the world is only amusement and play! Verily, the home of the Hereafter, - that is the life indeed (eternal life that will never end), if they but knew﴾⁵⁵ and: **﴿and verily, the home of the Hereafter is the best for those who fear Allah. Do you not then understand?﴾**⁵⁶

Death, according to the wise and believers, is a passage from an ephemeral stage to an eternal life in the Hereafter. So, if that is the case, the idea of a decayed body after death and its transformation into dust and bones becomes meaningless. Many people regard their bodies as a mental burden, so they resort to cosmetic surgery and bear the pain of the operation. So, how will one feel if he has an operation without feeling any pain?

On the Day of Resurrection, Allah ﷻ will resurrect all people and only the believers will have their faces and bodies beautified. Allah ﷻ says, describing the faces of the believers, **﴿some faces that Day shall be shining and radiant, looking at their Lord﴾**⁵⁷, and **﴿so Allah will save them from the evil of that Day, and will shed over them a light of beauty and a joy﴾**⁵⁸ and **﴿you will recognise in their faces the brightness of delight﴾**⁵⁹

Some people may say: death denotes separation from one's beloved relatives and children and this causes sorrow.

The answer to that is: Yes, but only for a short time. And if you ask a dead man, a thousand years after his death, 'how long did you last on earth?', he will say: 'A day or two.' Therefore, such separation should not leave fear of death in

⁵⁵ Al-Ankabut: Verse, 64.

⁵⁶ Yusuf: Verse, 109.

⁵⁷ Al-Qiyamah: Verses, 22-23.

⁵⁸ Al-Insaa'n: Verse, 11.

⁵⁹ Al-Mutaffifin: Verse, 24.

the psyche; instead it should leave tears of sorrow that seek mercy and forgiveness from Allah ﷻ.

On the authority of Ibn Omar ﷺ: "Sa'd bin 'Ubada became sick and the Prophet ﷺ along with Abdur Rahman Ibn Auf, Sad Ibn Abu Waqqas and Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud visited him to inquire about his health. When he ﷺ came to him, he found him surrounded by his household and he asked, "Has he died?" They said, "No, O Allah's Messenger." The Prophet ﷺ wept and when the people saw the weeping of Allah's Messenger ﷺ they all wept. He ﷺ said, "Will you listen? Allah does not punish for shedding tears, nor for the grief of the heart but He punishes or bestows His Mercy because of this." He ﷺ pointed to his tongue and added, "The deceased is punished for the wailing of his relatives over him."⁶⁰

Anas Ibn Malik ﷺ reported: "We went with Allah's Messenger ﷺ to the blacksmith Abu Saif, and he was the husband of the wet-nurse of Ibrahim (the son of the Prophet ﷺ). Allah's Messenger ﷺ took Ibrahim and kissed him and smelled him and later we entered Abu Saif's house and at that time Ibrahim was drawing his last breaths, and the eyes of Allah's Messenger ﷺ started shedding tears. Abdur Rahman Ibn Auf said, "O Allah's Messenger ﷺ, even you are weeping!" He ﷺ said, "O Ibn Auf, this is mercy." Then he ﷺ wept more and said, "The eyes are shedding tears and the heart is grieved, and we will not say except what pleases our Lord, O Ibrahim! Indeed we are grieved by your separation."⁶¹ Separation from one's beloved relatives and children leaves grief and sadness, but it should not cause a sense of fear of death. It is a temporary separation, followed by reunion on the Day of Resurrection; a reunion of love and a reunion of hatred, curse and eternal separation.

⁶⁰ Sahih al-Bukhari, The Book of Funerals (44).

⁶¹ Sahih al-Bukhari, The Book of Funerals (43).

As for the reunion of the believers, it is one of love, fellowship and intimacy. As for the reunion of the disbelievers and sinners, it is one of hatred, curse and dissociation. Allah ﷻ says **«Friends on that Day will be foes one to another except the Righteous»**⁶² and **«when those who were followed disown (declare themselves innocent of) those who followed them, and they see the torment, then all their relations will be cut off from them»**⁶³

When the believers and people of Paradise enter Paradise, and the people of the Fire enter Hellfire, there will be no reunion between them whatsoever. As for the hypocrites, there will be a barrier between them and the believers, and they will implore the believers for guidance, but in vain; Allah ﷻ says, **«On the day when you shall see the believers, men and women, their light shining forth before them and on their right hands. Glad news for you this Day: Gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein you shall dwell forever. That is the supreme triumph. On the day when the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women will say to those who believe: Wait for us! Let us get something from your light! It will be said: Go back to your rear and seek for light! Then there will separate them a wall wherein is a gate, the inner side whereof contained mercy, while the outer side thereof is toward the torment. The Hypocrites will call the believers: were we not with you? The believers will reply: Yes, but you led yourselves into temptation, you looked forward for our destruction; you doubted (in Faith); and you were deceived by false desires, till the Command of Allah came to pass. And the chief deceiver (Satan) deceived you in respect of Allah»**⁶⁴

⁶² Az-Zukhruf: Verse, 67.

⁶³ Al-Baqarah: Verse, 166.

⁶⁴ Al-Hadid: 12-14.

Therefore, Muslim brother and sister, make sure that you build your house on piety and righteousness, associate yourself with the pious and stick to them, so that you will be resurrected and reunited with them in Paradise.

Some people say that they fear death because they are afraid of leaving their children alone with no provider, after their death. They have the right to fear death, because Allah ﷻ says, **﴿and let those (guardians) have the same fear in their minds as they would have for their own, if they had left weak offspring behind. So let them fear Allah﴾**⁶⁵. But, have you left your children to anyone other than Allah? If so, I will have the same feeling of fear of death as you do. But, since you have left them in the Hands of Allah ﷻ, He ﷻ will not let them down. How many orphans and poor have become rich. The story of the two orphan boys in Surat al-Kahf is but clear evidence that Allah ﷻ is the Provider and Protector. He ﷻ has guarded their father's treasure, after his death, as mercy from Him, until they attain the age of full strength.

You should always remember that Allah ﷻ is the All-Provider, Owner of Power, the Most Strong and He ﷻ has taken it upon Himself to provide for His creation; Allah ﷻ says, **﴿by the Lord of the heaven and the earth, it is the truth, just as it is the truth that you can speak﴾**⁶⁶

Some say that they fear death because they have committed sins. The answer to that is: your feeling of fear is a provision of your Faith. A true believer is the one who combines fear, hope and love. Whenever these three are combined in a believer's heart, Allah will give him what he wishes and make him safe from fear.

⁶⁵ An-Nisa': Verse, 9.

⁶⁶ Az-Zariyat: Verse, 23.

Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "Fear, hope and Love of Allah are the only way to safeguard the boundary limits of Allah. The heart becomes corrupted when it is deprived of these three, and weakened when one of these three is weak, accordingly."⁶⁷

Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "Fear and hope is the double medicine that cures the heart. If the heart is more likely infected with the disease of security from Allah's scheme, then it should be cured by fear; if it is overwhelmed by despair from the Mercy of Allah, then hope is better, in order to achieve the balance between them (i.e., fear and hope)."⁶⁸ Allah ﷻ says, **﴿Say: "O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah, for Allah forgives all sins, for He is Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful﴾**⁶⁹

6.3.3 - Helpful Actions

The aforementioned remedies were aimed at alleviating some of the feeling of fear from which believers suffer. Now we will discuss some recommended actions, which help alleviate the effect of fear on the human psyche.

1. Remembering death by visiting the graves and attending funerals

Abu Sai'd رضي الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Keep much in remembrance death which is the cutter-off of pleasure."⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Al-Fatawah: 15/21.

⁶⁸ "Ihya' Ulum ad-Din", 4/163-164.

⁶⁹ Az-Zumar: 53.

⁷⁰ Reported by Imam Ahmed: 2/292 and at-Tirmidhi: 26.

Abdullah Ibn Omar ؓ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: "These hearts become rusty just as iron does when water affects it." On being asked what could clear them he ؓ replied, "A great amount of remembrance of death and recitation of the Qur'an."⁷¹

On the authority of Buraidah Ibn al-Hasib ؓ, the Prophet ﷺ said: "I forbade you to visit graves, but you may now visit them, for it reminds you of the Hereafter."⁷²

On the authority of Abdullah Ibn Mas'oud ؓ, the Prophet ﷺ said: "I forbade you to visit graves, but you may now visit them, for they produce abstinence in this world and act as a reminder of the next."⁷³

On the authority of Anas ؓ, the Prophet ﷺ said: "I forbade you to visit graves, but you may now visit them, for they soften the heart, evoke tears and remind you of the Hereafter; but do not use obscene language."⁷⁴

2. Exposing the person stricken with fear to funerals, dead bodies and blood:

This remedy helps in overcoming fear of the above natural dreadful scenes. Psychologists and modern educationalists have used this method and it has proved effective. A psychologist has stated: "Do the thing that you fear and you will definitely kill your fear."⁷⁵ And if we look at the lives of the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet ﷺ) in their Jihad and

⁷¹ At-Tirmidhi and al-Bayhaqi in "Shu'ab al-Iman".

⁷² Sahih Muslim: 'The book of Funerals', 106.

⁷³ Transmitted by At-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah.

⁷⁴ Narrated by al-Hakim with a Good *Sanad*, 1/376.

⁷⁵ See: "Education In Islam", p.147 and "Al-Murshid an-Nafsi", p.197.

battlefields, we will see that death fled from them. It was said: "Seek death and life will be given to you."

3. Travelling Alone on Long Journeys:

This will help put an end to the fear from separation, which is often associated with the idea of death; and it is permissible, in case of overriding necessity. Ibn Hajar, may Allah have mercy on him, commented on the Prophet's ﷺ Hadith: "If the people knew what I know about travelling alone, then nobody would travel alone at night"⁷⁶, saying: "The prohibition of travelling alone is based on fear when it is not necessary to do so."⁷⁷ However, if it is necessary for one to travel, then he should do so, provided that he will not suffer greater damage than the fear which he set out to overcome on the first place.

4. Treatment by seclusion in separate hospitals:

Wyre Mitchel has developed a method to treat people stricken by the feeling of fear by isolating them from their families.⁷⁸ This method is similar to what some parents do with their children; they arrange separate bedrooms for them, away from their own. This method bears fruit, because the child starts relying on himself, the feeling of fear and the effect of separation diminish, and separation becomes acceptable and natural.

5. Since the idea of death is prevalent in wars, military psychologists have advised soldiers the following:

a. Expect the worst and at the same time avoid it, Allah ﷻ says, **﴿make ready for them all you can of force﴾**⁷⁹ and

⁷⁶ Sahih al-Nukhari: 'The Book of Jihad' (135).

⁷⁷ 'Fat'h al-Bari': 6/138.

⁷⁸ Encyclopaedia of Psychology, 139-140.

⁷⁹ Al-Anfal: Verse, 60.

«Say: “Nothing will happen to us except what Allah has decreed for us.”⁸⁰

b. Accept the inevitable with pleasure and submission:

On the authority of Suhaib Ibn Sinan ar-Rumi ؓ, the Prophet ﷺ said: “Strange are the ways of a believer, for there is good in every affair of his, and this is not the case with anyone else, except in the case of a believer, for if he has an occasion to feel delight, he thanks (Allah), thus there is good for him in it, and if he gets into trouble and shown resignation (and endures it patiently), there is good for him in it.”⁸¹

c. Use the Law of Averages and put optimism before pessimism

Frederick. J. Mahlstedt, a friend of Dale Carnegie, the author of “How to stop Worrying and Start Living”, said: “Early in June, 1944, I was lying in a slit trench near Omaha Beach. I was with the 999th Signal Service Company, and we had just ‘dug in’ in Normandy. As I looked around at that slit trench – just a rectangular hole in the ground – I said to myself, ‘This looks just like a grave.’ When I lay down and tried to sleep in it, it felt like a grave. I could not help saying to myself, ‘Maybe this is my grave.’ When the German bombers began coming over at 11 p.m., and the bombs started falling, I was scared stiff. For the first two or three nights I could not sleep at all. By the fourth or fifth night, I was almost a nervous wreck. I knew that if I did not do something, I would go stark crazy. So I reminded myself that five nights had passed, and I was still alive; and so was every man in our outfit. Only two had even been injured, and they had been hurt, not by German bombs, but by falling flak from our own anti-aircraft guns. I decided to stop worrying by doing something constructive. So

⁸⁰ At-Tawbah: Verse, 51.

⁸¹ Sahih Muslim, ‘The Book of Zuhd’: 64.

I built a thick wooden roof over my slit trench, to protect myself from flak. I thought of the vast area over which my unit was spread. I told myself that the only way I could be killed in that deep, narrow slit trench was by a direct hit; and I figured out that the chance of a direct hit on me was not one in ten thousand. After a couple of nights of looking at it in this way, I calmed down and slept even through the bombing raids.”

The United States Navy used the statistics of the law of averages to raise the morale of their men. One ex-sailor told me that when he and his shipmates were assigned to high-octane tankers, they were scared stiff. They all believed that if a tanker loaded with high-octane gasoline was hit by a torpedo, it would explode and blow everybody to kingdom come. But the U.S. Navy knew otherwise, and they issued exact figures showing that out of one hundred tankers hit by torpedoes, sixty had stayed afloat; and of the forty that did sink, only five sank in less than ten minutes. That meant time to get off the ship – it also meant casualties were exceedingly small. Did this help morale? “This knowledge of the law of averages wiped out my jitters,” “The whole crew felt better. We knew we had a chance, and that, by the law of averages, we probably would not be killed.”

If we study the history of our great Muslim heroes and their conquests in decisive battles, we will find that most of them died in their beds. The most famous statement in Islamic military history, was that of Khalid Ibn al-Walid ؓ when he was dying. He said: “I have fought in more than a hundred battles and there is no place in my entire body without an injury of a sword or a stab of a spear, and here I am now dying on my bed like a camel. May the minds of the cowards never rest.”⁸²

⁸² “Al-Bidaya wan-Nihaya”, 7/117.

7. Fear of Sickness

7.1 - Definition

Fear of sickness is a disease that attacks humans, because of the fear of a specific disease or certain conditions, such as heart disease, tuberculosis, other incurable disease or even old age.

7.2 - Symptoms

- a. Psychic obsessions that appear in the form of imagination and suspicions of the disease feared.
- b. Fear of mixing with other people, hence preferring isolation for fear of being infected by contagious diseases.
- c. Avoidance of anything that might cause the imagined disease, such as exaggerated fear of pollution and bacteria, and excessive cleaning of the body, clothes, food and dishes.
- d. Relating any sickness to the imaginary disease, to the extent that a person who fears tuberculosis, for example, fears any coughing in case it is an indication that he is infected with tuberculosis, and a person who fears cancer, for example, thinks that any swelling that appears in his body might be a sign of the disease.⁸³

⁸³ "Encyclopaedia of Psychology", 115, and "The Psychology of Fear", 120-225.

7.3 - Causes of Fear of Sickness

a. Fear of death.

b. Fear of pain and suffering: this might induce some people to refuse to have a necessary surgical operation, for fear of the pain and suffering it might entail, as soon as they start thinking of it.⁸⁴

c. Fear of being struck by a permanent disease, in particular that which affects the sense of hearing, vision, taste, or skin diseases, such as leprosy, mange, partial or complete paralysis.

d. Fear of alienation from society.⁸⁵

7.4 - Fear of Sickness: disease of the present time

The Khalij Imarati newspaper published on 18/10/1991 a report about the fear of sickness, which has become a recognized disease in Britain. The newspaper said: "It has been announced in London that the phenomenon of fear of sickness, which affects many British people, has become an officially recognized disease. The latest published statistics in London have shown that 80% of people who occasionally visit hospital and 30% of people who regularly visit hospital are not afflicted with any organic diseases. A huge amount of money has been spent on their medical examination by X-ray, blood test, as well as the consumption of the doctors' long hours.

⁸⁴ "Encyclopaedia of Psychology", 115-119.

⁸⁵ "The Psychology of Fear", 211.

Although they are certain they are sick, their physical condition is good and they are fit. British scientists and doctors have confirmed that these people are suffering from a disease, which could be more dangerous than the pains caused by organic diseases. Dr. Richard Stebern, a psychiatrist at Saint George's Hospital, has confirmed that experts at the Ministry of Health in Britain have started to carry out psychological and organic treatments on those people struck by delusive imagination. The doctors have mentioned that one of those people used to be obsessed with checking his temperature. He used to take his temperature about ten times a day and imagine that it was high and that he had a high fever. His delusive imagination reached such a state that he started taking his temperature every five minutes and used to keep a thermometer in each room of his house.

Doctors carried out a number of tests on this person and discovered that there was no organic disease whatsoever. However, they decided to carry out a psychological treatment on this person, considering that his case was identical to real dangerous organic disease.

Experts have confirmed that there are hundreds of such cases that led to the ruin of these peoples' careers and futures, just because of their imaginary disease and their fear of being struck by sickness. Some of them go so far as to undergo a minute medical examination using x-rays and computers. Some doctors have stated that these cases are similar to permanent physical disability.

Some hospitals and health centers have embarked on an intensive program of nine weeks to help people with imaginary diseases and convince them that they are not sick at all. And indeed, a number of them have been cured and have stopped visiting their doctors. Their health has gradually

improved until they have become fully fit and stopped thinking of their health problems.

Therefore, medical experts and doctors were right to consider this kind of disease very dangerous and to develop and provide psychological treatment for it. They realized that listening to the complaints of those people suffering from the fear of disease is the best way to treat this difficult problem."

7.5 - Methods of Treatment

7.5.1 - Introduction

In the past, people used witchcraft and magic to treat the fear of sickness. Even today, these methods are still used in most Muslim and non-Muslim countries by ordinary and even educated people. Although these methods might help in alleviating some of the psychological anguish brought about by fear of sickness, they are forbidden in the Shari'ah law, because they use words and beliefs that remove a person from the fold of Tahweed (doctrine of Divine Unity) into the fold of Shirk (associating others as partners with Allah).

It is worth mentioning that the treatment of fear of diseases by using religion is of great importance to the human soul, but it should go hand in hand with adopting the means in order to achieve the aim of Tawakkul.⁸⁶ The Prophet ﷺ said: "tie it and put your trust in Allah."⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Tawakkul: reliance, unshakable trust in Allah. It is trusting absolutely that Allah will be just and merciful and provide for His servants.

⁸⁷ Reported by at-Tirmidhi, on the authority of Anas ؓ and Albani classified it as *Hassan* in "*Takhreej Al-Mishkaat*", Hadith, 22 and "*Al-Ja'mi*" Hadith, 9/107.

When an epidemic occurs in a place and people fear that they might get infected, they should put their trust in Allah ﷻ, by making sincere Du'ah and seeking His protection; and then they should adopt the necessary treatment to avoid being struck by the disease. For example, plague is a punishment that Allah ﷻ inflicted on a group of people of Israel. Therefore, the Prophet ﷺ said: "If plague strikes a land and you are inside it, do not leave it, and if it strikes a land and you are not inside it, do not enter it."⁸⁸ This is called preventive measures and it helps to curb the spread of diseases.

However, if an epidemic is widespread in a land, people, inside or outside, should not be disturbed by it to the extent that they become scared of it, because worry is itself a kind of fear.

Other diseases similar to plague are AIDS, venereal diseases and gonorrhea. To avoid them, one must avoid the things that cause them, such as sexual relations with infected people. Therefore, people should not commit fornication and adultery, and should seek legal marriages. Also, the couple can do with a test before marriage to check whether they are infected with one of these diseases or not. If plague was a punishment from Allah ﷻ inflicted upon the wicked people of Israel, venereal diseases are also a punishment from Allah ﷻ inflicted upon sinners who transgress Allah's boundaries and Shari'ah.

As for other non-contagious diseases, such as fear of cancer or heart disease, their treatment lies in avoiding anything that can cause such disease. For example, doctors have agreed that smoking causes tumors and overweight is one of the causes of heart disease. So people should follow this advice to avoid being infected by such diseases.

⁸⁸ Reported by at-Tirmidhi and Albani classified it as *Hassan* in "Al-Ja'mi" Hadith, 7/107

7.5.2 - Important Advice for Treatment

1. Seeking Allah's Help and Protection by making Du'ah
These are a number of supplications that the Prophet ﷺ used to say:

On the authority of Anas ﷺ, the Prophet ﷺ said: "O Allah! I seek refuge with You from weakness and laziness, and I seek refuge with You from deafness, dumbness, madness, leprosy, and the worst sickness."⁸⁹

On the authority of Ali ﷺ, the Prophet ﷺ said: "O Allah, grant me enjoyment of my hearing and sight and protect me in my religion and body."⁹⁰

On the authority of Ibn Abbas ﷺ, the Prophet ﷺ said: "O Allah, I ask you to grant me chastity and well-being in my life and religion, and my household and property; O Allah cover my faults, protect me from my fear...etc."⁹¹

One of the Prophet's ﷺ supplications to treat fear of old age is: "O Allah, grant me Your great provision when I reach old age and when my life ceases."⁹²

⁸⁹ Transmitted by al-Hakim, al-Bayhaqi and Albani classified it as Sahih in "Takhreej Al-Mishkaat", Hadith, 2470 and in "Al-Ja'mi" Hadith, 1296.

⁹⁰ Reported by at-Tabarani in "Al-Awsat" and Albani classified it as Sahih in "Ar-Rawdh an-Nadheer", hadith 690 and in "Al-Ja'mi" Hadith, 1280.

⁹¹ Reported by al-Bazzar and Albani classied it as Sahih in "Al-Ja'mi", hadith, 1285.

⁹² Reported by at-Tabarani in "Al-Awsat" and Albani classied it as Sahih in "Al-Ja'mi", hadith, 1266.

2. Seeking protections by having vaccine against the disease, this is called preventive medicine.

3. Taking great care of one's cleanliness and hygiene.

4. Using the Law of Averages:

A woman told Dale Carnegie, the author of "How to Stop Worrying and Start Living", "A few years ago an infantile-paralysis epidemic swept over our part of California. In the old days, I would have been hysterical. But my husband persuaded me to act calmly. We took all the precautions we could: we kept our children away from crowds, away from school and the movies. By consulting the Board of Health, we found out that even during the worst infantile-paralysis epidemic that California had ever known up to that time, only 1835 children had been stricken in the entire state of California, and that the usual number was around two hundred or three hundred. Tragic as those figures are, we nevertheless felt that, according to the law of averages, the chances of any one child being stricken were remote."⁹³

5. Co-operate with the Inevitable:

a. By showing patience, Allah ﷻ says, (so verily with every difficulty there is relief. Verily with every difficulty there is relief)⁹⁴ and (Be sure We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere, who say when afflicted with calamity: "To Allah we belong and to Him is our return." They are those on whom (descend) Blessings from Allah and Mercy and they are the ones that receive guidance)⁹⁵

⁹³ See: "How to Stop Worrying and Start Living", p.79-80.

⁹⁴ Ash-Sharh: Verses, 5-6.

⁹⁵ Al-Baqarah: Verses, 155-157.

When the Prophet ﷺ was asked which people suffered the greatest affliction, he ﷺ replied, "The Prophets, then those who come after them, then those who come after them. A man is afflicted in keeping his religion. If he is firm in his religion his trial is severe, but if there is weakness in his religion it is made light for him, and it continues like that till he walks on the earth having no sin."⁹⁶

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Strange are the ways of a believer for there is good in every affair of his and this is not the case with anyone else, except in the case of a believer, for if he has an occasion to feel delight, he thanks (Allah), thus there is good for him in it, and if he gets into trouble and shown resignation (and endures it patiently), there is good for him in it."⁹⁷

b. By the Qur'an and confirmed Ruqya⁹⁸ of the Prophet ﷺ: Allah ﷻ has informed us that in the Qur'an there is a healing for the believers; He ﷻ says, **(We send down in the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe)**⁹⁹. Ibn al-Qaqqim said: "The whole Qur'an is a healing, as Allah ﷻ says in the previous Verse **(Say: "It is for those who believe, a guide and a healing)**¹⁰⁰ The Qur'an is a healing to the heart from the disease of ignorance, doubt and uncertainty. Allah ﷻ has not sent down from heaven any better or effective cure for any disease than the Qur'an.

⁹⁶ Transmitted by at-Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and ad-Darami, and at-Tirmidhi said this is a *Hasan Hahih* tradition.

⁹⁷ Sahih Muslim, "The Book of Zuhd", Hadith 64.

⁹⁸ *Ruqya*: Divine Speech recited as a means of curing disease. It is a kind of treatment, i.e. to recite Surat al-Fatihah or any other Surah of the Qur'an and then blow one's breath with saliva over a sick person's body-part.

⁹⁹ Al-Isra': Verse 82.

¹⁰⁰ Fussilat: Verse 44.

It is confirmed in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, on the authority of Abu Sai'd al-Khudri ؓ, "A group of the Companions of Allah's Messenger were proceeding on a journey when they dismounted near one of the Arab tribes and requested them to entertain them as their guests, but they (the tribespeople) refused to entertain them. Then the chief of that tribe was bitten by a snake (or stung by a scorpion) and he was given all kinds of treatment, but all in vain. Some of them said, "Will you go to the group (those travelers) who have dismounted near you and see if one of them has something useful?" They came to them and said, "O group! Our leader has been bitten by a snake (or stung by a scorpion) and we have treated him with everything but nothing benefited him. Has any one of you anything useful?" One of them replied, "Yes, by Allah, I know how to treat with a *Ruqya*. But, by Allah, we wanted you to receive us as your guests but you refused. I will not treat your patient with a *Ruqya* till you fix for us something as wages." Consequently they agreed to give those travellers a flock of sheep. The man went with them (the people of the tribe) and started spitting (on the bite) and reciting *Surat-al-Fatihah* till the patient was healed and started walking as if he had not been sick. When the tribespeople paid them the wages they had agreed upon, some of them (the Prophet's Companions) said, "Distribute (the sheep)." But the one who had treated with the *Ruqya* said, "Do not do that till we go to Allah's Messenger and mention to him what has happened, and see what he will order us." So they came to Allah's Messenger and recounted to him and he said, "How do you know that *Surat-al-Fatihah* is a *Ruqya*? You have done the right thing. Divide (what you have got) and assign for me a share with you."¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Sahih al-Bukhari, "The Book of Medicine", Hadith 5417 and Sahih Muslim "The Book of Peace", Hadith 2201.

The chief was healed by *Surat al-Fatihah* and started walking as if he had not been sick. It is the easiest and simplest treatment. If people had better use of *Surat al-Fatihah* for treatment, they would derive enormous benefit and healing.

I stayed in Makkah for a while. I fell sick and could not find a doctor, or medicine; so I used to treat myself with *Surat al-Fatihah*. I could feel its healing power and effect on me; so I used to prescribe it to any one who was suffering from pain and several of them were cured quickly.

Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, said: "When Allah's Messenger ؐ fell ill, Gabriel used to recite these verses: "In the name of Allah, may He cure you from all kinds of illness and safeguard you from the evil of a jealous one when he feels jealous and from the influence of the evil eye."¹⁰²

Abu sai'd al-Khudri ؓ said: "Gabriel ؑ came to Allah's Messenger ؐ and said: "Muhammad, have you fallen ill?" Thereupon he ؐ said: "Yes." He (Gabriel ؑ) said: "In the name of Allah I exorcise you from everything and safeguard you from every evil that may harm you and from the eye of a jealous one. Allah would cure you and I invoke the name of Allah for you."¹⁰³

Abdullah Ibn Amru' Ibn al-A's ؓ said: "The Prophet ؐ used to teach them the following words in the case of alarm: I seek refuge in Allah's perfect Words from His anger, the evil of His servants, the evil suggestions of the devils and their presence."¹⁰⁴

c. Using the Right Medical Treatment for the Disease:

¹⁰² Sahih Muslim.

¹⁰³ Sahih Muslim "The Book of Peace" Hadith 2186.

¹⁰⁴ Transmitted by Abu Dawud: hadith 3893, and at-Tabarani: 1087.

On the authority of Usamah Ibn Sharik ؓ, the Prophet ﷺ said: "Make use of medical treatment, for Allah has not made a disease without appointing a remedy for it, with the exception of one disease, namely old age."¹⁰⁵

On the authority of Jabir Ibn Abdullah ؓ, the Prophet ﷺ said: "There is a remedy for every malady, and when the remedy is applied to the disease it is cured with the permission of Allah, the Exalted and Glorious."¹⁰⁶

Dale Carnegie said: The late Dean Hawkes of Columbia University told me that he had taken a rhyme as one of his mottoes:

For every ailment under the sun,
There is a remedy, or there is none;
If there be one, try to find it;
If there be none, never mind it.¹⁰⁷

As for old age, it has no cure, except acceptance of reality and the fact that one has to take advantage of one's youth and wisely give a good education to one's children, so that they will look after a person when he grows old.

On the authority of Ibn Abbas ؓ, the Prophet ﷺ said: "There are two blessings which many people lose: (They are) health and free time for doing good."¹⁰⁸ This means that many people do not use their health and free time in performing more and more good deeds.

¹⁰⁵ Reported by Abu Dawud, Imam Ahmed, Ibn Hibban and al-Hakim. Albani classified it as Hadith Sahih in his book "*Al-Ja'mi*", hadith 2927.

¹⁰⁶ Sahih Muslim, "The Book of Peace" Hadith 69.

¹⁰⁷ See: "How to Stop Worrying and Start Living", p. 93.

¹⁰⁸ Sahih al-Bukhari, "The Book of *Ar-Riqaq*", 6049.

On the authority of Ibn Omar ؓ, the Prophet ﷺ said: "Be in this world as if you were a stranger or a traveler." The sub-narrator added: Ibn Omar used to say, "If you survive till the evening, do not expect to be alive in the morning, and you survive till the morning, do not expect to be alive in the evening, and take from your health for your sickness, and from your life for your death."¹⁰⁹ This means, 'Do good deeds when you are healthy and alive before you become sick and die.'

6. Death Caused by Disease is an Atonement and Martyrdom

Qur'anic verses and noble Ahadith have informed us that believers get their reward according to the endurance they have shown in the face of hardships and difficulties, and the firm faith they have kept in the face of *Fitnah*. Any believer who dies from a disease, Allah ﷻ will place in the ranks of martyrs.

a. Plague

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Plague is the cause of martyrdom of every Muslim (who dies because of it)."¹¹⁰

Aishah asked Allah's Messenger ﷺ about plague, and Allah's Messenger ﷺ informed her saying, "Plague was a punishment which Allah used to send on whom He wished, but Allah made it a blessing for the believers. None (among the believers) remains patient in a land in which plague has broken out and considers that nothing will befall him except what Allah has ordained for him, but that Allah will grant him a reward similar to that of a martyr."¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Sahih al-Bukhari, "The Book of *Ar-Riqaq*", 6053.

¹¹⁰ Sahih al-Bukhari, "The Book of Medicine", 30 and Sahih Muslim, 166.

¹¹¹ Sahih al-Bukhari, "The Book of Prophets", 54-55.

b. Suffering from Abdominal Disease

On the authority of Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه, the Prophet ﷺ said: "He (a Muslim) who dies of an abdominal disease is a martyr, and he who dies of plague is a martyr."¹¹²

On the authority of Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه, the Prophet ﷺ said: "Five are regarded as martyrs: They are those who die because of plague, abdominal disease, drowning or one who dies under a falling building, and the martyrs in Allah's cause."¹¹³

On the authority of Jabir Ibn Atik رضي الله عنه, the Prophet ﷺ said: "There are seven types of martyrdom apart from being killed in the way of Allah. Those who die of plague, those who are drowned, those who die of pleurisy, those who die of an internal complaint, those who are burnt to death, those who are killed by a building falling on them, and women who die while pregnant, are martyrs."¹¹⁴

On the authority of Utbah Ibn as-Sulami رضي الله عنه, the Prophet ﷺ said: "On the Day of Judgement, the martyrs and those who die of plague will apply to Our Lord for a decision regarding those who die of plague. Our Lord will reply, "Look at their wounds, for if their wounds resemble those of people who have been killed as martyrs, whose blood spills and smells like musk, then they are martyrs. When they check them, they find their wounds resemble those of the martyrs."¹¹⁵

¹¹² Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, 165.

¹¹³ Sahih al-Bukhari, 164.

¹¹⁴ Transmitted by at-Tirmishi, Imam Malik, Abu Dawud and an-Nasa'i.

c. Tuberculosis

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Those who die in the cause of Allah are martyrs, women who die while pregnant are martyrs, those who are burnt to death are martyrs, those who are drowned are martyrs, those who die of tuberculosis are martyrs and those who die of abdominal diseases are martyrs."¹¹⁶

d. Death caused by Pleurisy

On the authority of Uqbah Ibn A'mir رضي الله عنه, the Prophet ﷺ said: "Those who die of pleurisy are martyrs."¹¹⁷

Dear brothers and sisters, if your disease is an atonement and your death of disease is martyrdom, why fear death and disease? Try to use all the necessary treatment to cure your diseases and then put your trust on Allah ﷻ, who says in the Qur'an, **(and it is He (Allah) Who gives me food and drink. And when I am ill it is He Who cures me; Who will cause me to die and then to live (again); and Who I hope will forgive me my faults on the Day of Judgment)**¹¹⁸.

So stop worrying and start living!

¹¹⁵ Reported by Imam Ahmed: 4/185 and Albani classified it as *Hadith Hassan*, p.37-38.

¹¹⁶ Narrated by at-Tabarani.

¹¹⁷ *Hadith Marfu'*, reported by Imam Ahmed: 4/157 and Albani classified it as *Hadith Hassan*, p.40.

¹¹⁸ Ash-Shu'araa: Verses, 79-82.

A Message from the Publisher

Here ends the book "Overcoming the Fear of Death and Sickness"

As we have seen the best cure for the fear of death and disease is through the strength of our belief in our Lord, Allah and our seeking for His help and for His reward.

We have therefore included herein a section from one of our earlier books *Enlightening Glimpses of the Devout Worship of the Predecessors* in the hope that it will serve as an encouragement for us all to, through the prayer, build our level of Taqwa and confidence in Allah, even though we may be afflicted with disease or with the prospect of death.

Staying up at Night and Prayer

The type of prayer that *Islaam* demands from the believers is that which can furnish them with a spiritual power to help them confront all wordly problems and hardships. *Allaah* says:

"And seek assistance in patience and prayer; and truly it is heavy and hard except for those who are devout: those who are certain that they are going to meet their Lord, and that unto Him they are going to return."

Surah al-Baqarah (2):45/46

It is the type of prayer which connects souls with the greatest power of *Allaah* which has control over everything. It is the prayer which provides the self with the ability and strength to overcome difficulties of life.

It is the type of prayer that gives the believer an opportunity to expose his problems and miseries in front of his Lord and thereby acquire total peace and tranquility which pervade his heart and all his body. It is the prayer which creates in the heart of the believer the energy which allows him to become active and alert in order to become more closer to his Lord, and actively engage in performing good deeds and abstaining from immorality and evil. It is the prayer which sows the seeds of God-consciousness and observe the limits set by our Lord, Glorious is He.

The *Qur'aan* is replete with verses which inform us about the required kind of *salaah* which includes some, if not all of these characteristics:

"Verily, man has been created very impatient: irritable (discontented) when evil touches him; and niggardly when

good touches him; -except those devoted to prayers, those who remain constant in their prayers.”

Surah al-Ma'aarij (70): 19-23

“And establish prayer: for prayer prevents from immorality and sin.” *Surah al-'Ankaboot (29): 45*

Allaah ﷻ also confirms success for those who are humble and devout in their prayer:

“Successful indeed are the believers: those who offer their prayers with all solemnity and submissiveness.”

Surah al-Mu'minoon (23): 1-2

He also warns those whose hearts are not keen on prayer:

“So woe unto those performers of prayers (hypocrites), who delay their prayer from its stated fixed time, those who do good deeds only to be seen [of men], and refuse even the smallest kind deeds.” *Surah al-Maa'oon (107): 4-7*

So the type of *salaah* which *Allaah* demands from us is not that which represent mere mutters and bodily movements without concentration and reflection; nor is it the one which is performed quickly, but rather one which elevates us spiritually every day and even every time towards our Lord so that we can remember *Allaah* constantly. *Allaah* ﷻ says:

“And offer prayers perfectly for My remembrance.”

Surah Taa-Haa (20): 14

So this is the kind of prayer which *Allaah* desires and this is the kind of prayer which was the apple of the Prophet's ﷺ eye, and that of his companions ﷺ and those who follow them in righteousness until *Allaah* inherits the earth and all that it contains.

It has been confirmed that the Prophet ﷺ made enormous efforts to obey his Lord and commanded his

companions to engage and struggle in worship within their capacity without causing themselves weariness and boredom. People are different as far as their energy and ability to worship are concerned; so whoever finds himself energetic enough to engage in much worship without experiencing boredom or suffering disorder can do so; and whoever is bound to experience boredom and weariness as a result of excessive worship should not do so.

We have cited earlier many authentic *ahaadeeth* to the effect that the Prophet ﷺ made a lot of effort to worship his Lord and that he encouraged his companions by precept and example to follow suit

We have also seen the several rules and regulations as to the way one should observe worship so as to shun boredom and weariness. Thus it becomes clear that exerting oneself in obedience to *Allaah* ﷻ is a commendable act for those who are able to do it.

To say that the Prophet ﷺ did not do the same as those whom we are going to mention in the pages that follow is absolutely true, for the simple reason that he ﷺ was sent to a nation where both the weak and the strong live side by side. *Allaah* ﷻ describes him in the *Qur'aan* by being extremely affectionate to the whole community of Muslims as mentioned in the verse:

“Verily, there has come unto you a messenger from amongst yourselves (that is, whom you know well). It grieves him that you should receive any injury or difficulty. He is anxious over you (to be rightly guided, to repent to *Allaah*, and beg Him to pardon and forgive your sins, in order that you may enter Paradise and be saved from the punishment of the Hell-Fire), for the believers [he is] full of pity, kind and merciful.”

So the Prophet ﷺ refrained from many voluntary acts which he liked to do so that they would not become obligatory upon his *Ummah*. The strong have a role model in him and the weak have a role model in him, too. *Allaah* likes the strong believer more than the weak, even though both are loved by *Allaah*.

The guidance of the Prophet ﷺ concerning his dedicated worship of his Lord has been proved beyond any shadow of doubt and one need not argue that there is no evidence in support of struggling in worship. A detailed discussion of this issue has been mentioned in past sections.

Worship of *Allaah* prepares a believer for devout servitude to *Allaah*: one who is attracted to *Allaah*, enlightened, mentally alert and intellectually active. Praying at night is not possible, especially at first, without some kind of struggle and effort against satan and against desires. Therefore if the Muslim does not control his sleeping habits, he will undoubtedly neglect many good deeds, such as offering *Fajr* prayer in congregation, seeking *Allaah*'s forgiveness in the last hours of the night, offering *Tahajjud* prayers, offering '*Ishaa*' prayer in congregation, and observing the remembrance of *Allaah* after *Fajr* prayer. But if his sleeping pattern is not organised, then he will not be able to accommodate any of these deeds especially in this day and age when Western life-styles have become the norm in the Muslim world.

The Western man finishes his work, takes a rest, then engages in his time in entertainment which occupies him till very late at night.. This is the general norm in the West, which has also become the norm amongst many Muslims nowadays due to their attachment to television programs and

the news on radio which seem to have governed their lives. This state of affairs will doubtless lead to neglecting many obligations, voluntary acts of worship as well as many Islamic teachings. This is why a cure is needed, such as controlling our sleeping habits.

The night occupies a very special place in *Islaam*. *Allaah* ﷻ says:

"Verily, the rising by night [for *tahajjud* prayer] is very hard and most potent and good for governing [the soul], and most suitable for [understanding] the Word [of *Allah*]."
Surah al-Muzzammil (73): 6

The night awakens the believer and gives him more incentive to worship *Allaah* because there is much more reward in doing so at that time. Worship at night exercises a deep effect on the soul, and provides one with a better understanding of the *Qur'aan*. *Allaah* ﷻ praises those who wake up during the night and pray:

"Their sides forsake their beds, to invoke their Lord in fear and hope, and they spend [charity in *Allaah*'s Cause] out of what We have bestowed on them."

Surah as-Sajdah (32): 16

"And those who spend the night before their Lord, prostrate and standing."
Surah al-Furqaan (25): 64

"They used to sleep but little by night, and in the hours before dawn, they were [found] asking [*Allaah*] for forgiveness."

Surah adh-Dhaariyaat (51): 16

"Waking up at night for prayer while people are asleep; keeping away from the nonsense of everyday life; attaching oneself to *Allaah* and thereby receiving His Grace

and Light; seeking solace in His company; reciting the *Qur'aan* while everything is silent, as though it is descending from the Higher Council [of angels] and everything in the universe responds to it without a human utterance; and welcoming its radiance and its inspirations in the darkness of the night; all this represents the provision which assists one in bearing the burden of the 'weighty Word' and the difficult task of calling people to *Islaam*. It was a strenuous effort which the Prophet ﷺ anticipated and which those who call to this religion in all generations continue to anticipate. This [spiritual] provision enlightens the heart on the long tiring path towards *Allaah* and protects one from the whispers of the devil and from falling into the abyss of darkness that surround this enlightened path [of *Islaam*].

"Waking up at night is therefore an announcement of the soul's control [over the body], a response to the call of *Allaah* and a proof of preferring His intimacy. It is from this perspective that it is much more conducive to the understanding of the word of *Allaah* since recitation at that time has its sweetness. Prayer (*salaah*) has its concentration and reflection, and the intimate communication with the Creator has its transparency. All this leads to pouring into the heart intimacy, comfort and light which lack in the remembrance of *Allaah* and prayers offered during the day. *Allaah*, Glorious is He, who created this human heart, knows exactly what this heart needs in order to function properly. He also knows the times when it is more open and ready to receive the truth, as well as the factors which affect it more than anything else."¹¹⁹

"Remembrance of *Allaah* cannot be perfected without calmness and serenity. This is only possible at night. This is why *Allaah* has encouraged us remembrance in many verses in His book. This is the reason why the predecessors in the

¹¹⁹Sayyid Qutb, *Fee Dhilaalil-Qur'aan*, 8/346-347.

early generations of *Islaam* used to wake up at night for prayer. When half the night elapsed one would hear people calling:

*O Men of the night! Look for the Lord of a voice that is never rejected;
Only those who have resolve and diligence stay awake at night [for tahajjud].*

Therefore, only waking up at night for prayer can dissipate the darkness of ignorance with its light and keep the desire of enthusiasm alight in the hearts of men who seek the pleasure of *Allaah* and the Hereafter. Moreover, those people who observe praying *tahajjud* at night seem to exercise a great influence on the generations that come after them. As for those who do not observe this act, they surely make other people's hearts hard, as al-Bishr al-Haafee said, "It is sufficient for you to understand that a group of people who are dead revive others with their remembrance. And a group of people who are alive harden the hearts of others with their existence."

So 'the school' of *tahajjud* helps people cleanse their accumulating sins. Sins are washed only with tears and bravery is 'watered' only with tears at night. *Islaam* has defined its men only with such qualities. Ibnul-Qayyim described them in a few verses of poetry:

*They revive the night with obedience to their Lord:
with recitation, humbleness and imploring.
Their eyes flow with floods of tears
as does torrential rain.
At night they are monks, and when they struggle
against their enemy, they are the most brave.
On their faces, there are marks of prostration to their Lord;*

*And with those marks come the rays of His gleaming light.*¹²⁰

Factors that assist in waking up at night for *Tahajjud*:

1. Avoiding of excessive eating and drinking as this leads to heavy sleep.
2. taking a siesta during the day as this assists to wake at night
3. Learning about the immense virtues and merits of waking up at night as mentioned in many a verse in the *Qur'aan* and many a *hadeeth* of the Prophet ﷺ.
4. More than anything else, the love of *Allaah* and a strong faith in Him are amongst the noblest factors which assist people in waking. In this respect, a particular assistance is the thought that reciting one single letter from the *Qur'aan* at night is like conversing intimately with *Allaah*. So whoever loves to communicate intimately with his Lord should wake up for *tahajjud*. Here are some of the things that the pious predecessors have said in this regard:

al-Fudail ibn 'Iyaadh said, "When the sun sets, I rejoice [at the coming of] darkness as I will be alone with my Lord."

Abu Sulaimaan ad-Daaranees said, "The people [who pray at night] enjoy their nocturnal prayers much more than those who spend their time playing; and had it not been for the nights, I would not have liked to stay alive."

Muhammad ibnul-Munkadir said, "Only three pleasures of this world have remained: waking up at night for *tahajjud*,

¹²⁰*ar-Raqaa'iq* (with some alterations), pp. 31-35.

meeting with [Muslim] brothers, and offering *salaah* in congregation."¹²¹

There remains one question that needs to be addressed here: Which is better: standing longer in prayer or offering plenty of *ruku`* and prostration?

People of knowledge do not agree in this regard. *Imaam* ash-Shaafi'ee and a group of scholars are of the opinion that standing longer in prayer is better. Ash-Shawkaanee said in *Nailul-Awtaar*, "This is the correct opinion because Jaabir ibn 'Abdullaah ؓ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ was asked: Which prayer is the best, O Messenger of *Allaah*? 'Lengthening of *qunut*'¹²², he replied. *Imaam* an-Nawawee said, 'As far as I know, *qunut* in this *hadeeth* refers to standing in prayer, as unanimously agreed by all scholars.'

The traditions which state the virtues of prostration do not contradict this *hadeeth* as the word 'afdal' (is the best) mentioned in the *hadeeth* in the superlative has been used for standing up in prayer. Al-'Iraaqee said, "It is obvious that the *ahaadeeth* stating the superiority of lengthening the standing position in prayer refer to the voluntary prayers in which congregation is not prescribed. Where congregation is prescribed, the *imaam* should not lengthen the prayer unless he knows that people behind him would prefer lengthening and that nothing which requires otherwise occurs, such as the crying of babies. This explanation is valid because of the Prophet's recitation of *Surah al-'A'raaf* (a very long *surah*) in *Maghrib* prayer on one occasion."

Some other scholars say that lengthening the *ruku`* and prostration is better because *Allaah* says:

¹²¹*Mukhtasar Minhaajul-Qaasideen*, pp. 67- 68.

¹²²Muslim, *Salaatul-Musaafireen*, 756; at-Tirmidhee, *as-Salaah*, 387; and ibn Maajah, *Iqaamatus-Salaah*, 1421.

“Fall prostrate and draw near [to Allaah].”

Surah al-`Alaq (96): 19

Also there are the traditions that encourage long *ruku`* and prostrations like those mentioned earlier in which the Prophet ﷺ advised Thaubaan and Rabee`ah to offer plenty of prostrations. `Abdullaah ibn `Omar was once asked: “Is long *ruku`* during *salaah* better or long prostrations?” He replied, “A man’s sins are on his head, and prostration wipes out the sins of [the head].”

This was narrated by at-Tirmidhee and al-Baghawee from a number of scholars.

Other scholars have said that they are both equal in virtue. *Imaam* Ahmad ibn Hanbal was silent on the issue and he narrated two *ahaadeeth* on the subject without reaching a decision.

Ishaaq ibn Raahawaih said, “It is better to offer plenty of *ruku`* and prostration during the day; and it is better to lengthen the standing during the night unless a person has a routine of reciting the *Qur’aan* during the night. In that case, prolonging the *ruku`* and prostration is better since one can kill two birds with one stone: reciting one’s portion of the *Qur’aan* and offering plenty of *ruku`* and prostrations. Ibn `Adi said: ‘Ishaaq holds this opinion because people have described the prayer of the Prophet ﷺ as being with lengthy standing at night and not during the day.’”¹²³

¹²³ash-Shawkaanee, *Nailul-Awtaar*, 3/90-92; al-Baghawee, *Sharhus-Sunnah*, 3/151-153; and *Tuhfatul-Ahwadhee*, 2/399-400.

Examples of the struggle of the predecessors in prayer

a. The Companions of the Prophet ﷺ:

1. `Abdullaah ibn Mas`ood Abu Abdur-Rahmaan Al-Hudhalee ﷺ, the jurisprudent of the *Ummah* and one of the outstanding scholars. He was from Makkah and was from amongst the very early ones to accept *Islaam*:

Ibn Mas`ood ﷺ said, “I prayed behind the Prophet ﷺ one night and he kept on standing until an ill-thought came to me’. ‘What was that ill- thought?’ someone asked him. ‘I was about to sit down and leave him alone.’” he replied.¹²⁴

Al-Haafidh al-`Asqalaanee commented in *Fathul-Baaree*: “Ibn Mas`ood ﷺ was strong and very strict about emulating the Prophet ﷺ; but he was overcome by the thought of sitting down because he was not used to standing for such an unusually long time.

`Alqamah ibn Qais said: “I spent a night with Ibn Mas`ood and observed that he slept in the first part of the night and then woke up and started praying, reciting the *Qur’aan* as the *imaam* of a local *masjid* would recite (meaning people around him could hear him). He continued to do this until very late dawn when he eventually offered his *Witr* prayers.”¹²⁵

¹²⁴al-Bukhaaree, Muslim and Ahmad (see footnote no. 38 in the second section)

2. Mu`aadh ibn Jabal, Abu `Abdur-Rahmaan al-Ansaaree, from the Khazraj tribe and one of those who fought in the battle of Badr:

Abu Burdah narrated, "The Prophet ﷺ sent Abu Musaa al-Ash`aree and Mu`aadh ibn Jabal to Yemen. He sent each of them to administer a province because Yemen consisted of two provinces. The Prophet ﷺ said to them: 'Facilitate matters for the people and do not make things difficult for them. (Be kind and lenient [both of you] with the people and do not be hard on them) and give the people good news and do not repulse them.' So each of them went to carry on his job. When anyone of them toured his province and happened to come near [the border of the province of] his companion, he would visit him and greet him. Once, Mu`aadh toured that part of his state which was near [the border of the province of] Abu Musaa. Mu`aadh came riding on his mule till he reached Abu Musaa and saw him sitting, and the people had gathered around him. Behold! There was a man tied with his hands behind his neck. Mu`aadh said to Abu Musaa, 'O `Abdullaah ibn Qais! What is this?' Abu Musaa replied, 'This man has reverted to heathenism after having embraced *Islaam*'. Mu`aadh said, 'I will not dismount until he is killed.' Abu Musaa replied, 'He has been brought for this purpose, so come down.' Mu`aadh said, 'I will not dismount till he is killed.' So Abu Musaa ordered that he be killed. Then Mu`aadh dismounted and said, 'O `Abdullaah! How do you recite the *Qur'aan*?'. I recite the *Qur'aan* regularly at intervals and piecemeal. How do you recite it O Mu`aadh?' Mu`aadh said, 'I sleep in the first part of the night and then get up after having slept for the time devoted for my sleep, and then recite as much as *Allaah* has written for me.

¹²⁵at-Tabaraanee, *al-Kabeer*, no. 9404; al-Haithamee said in *al-Mujamma'*, 2/266, "The narrators of this *hadeeth* are those of the *saheeh* narrations."

So I seek *Allaah*'s reward for both my sleep as well as my prayer [at night]"¹²⁶

Mu`aadh sought *Allaah*'s reward for his sleep, for by sleeping he intended to build his strength so as to worship *Allaah*.

3. `Adiy ibn Haatim at-Taa'ee, the generous and son of the generous:

Ibn `Asaakir reported that 'Adiy ibn Haatim said: "I have always prepared for the time of prayer and I have always yearned for it."¹²⁷ He also said: "I have always had *wudu*' at the time of prayer since I accepted *Islaam*."¹²⁸

4. `Omar ibnul-Khattaab ؓ, the rightly guided *khaleefah*, the just ruler and the commander of the faithful:

Al-Miswar ibn Makhramah said, "I went to `Omar ibnul-Khattaab while he was shrouded (just before his death after he has been stabbed by Lu'lu'ah, the Jew). I asked, 'How is he?'. The people replied, 'As you can see'. Then I said: 'Wake him up because you will not wake him for something more important to him than prayer.' They woke him up saying: 'Prayers, prayers, O leader of the believers!' `Omar awoke and said: 'What? Is that so? By *Allaah*, anyone who neglects prayers has no right in *Islaam*.' He offered his prayers even though his wound was dripping with blood."¹²⁹

¹²⁶*al-Bukhaaree*, *Kitaabul-Maghaazee*, no. 4341 and 4342.

¹²⁷*Kanzul-'Ummaal*, 7/80; *Siyyaru A'lamin-Nubalaa'*, 3/564; *a-Isaabah fee Tamyeezis-Sahaabah*, 2/468.

¹²⁸*Adh-Dhahabee*, *Taarikeehul-Islaam*, 3/47, *Siyyaru A'laamin-Nubalaa'*, 3/164.

Sa'eed ibnul-Musayyib said, "Omar used to like prayers in the middle of the night."¹³⁰

Aslam Al-`Adawee said that `Omar used to pray at night for a long time and then he would wake up his family at dawn saying: "Prayer, prayer." He would then recite the verse:

"And enjoin prayer on your family, and be patient in offering them (that is, prayers). We ask not of you a provision (that is, to give us something: money, etc); We provide it for you. And the good end (that is, Paradise) is for the God-fearing." (Surah Taahaa 20:132)¹³¹

5. `Uthmaan ibn `Affaan ؓ, the rightly guided khaleefah, the generous and martyred caliph:

Muhammad ibn Seereen reported: "When people surrounded `Uthmaan ؓ and intended to assassinate him, his wife said: 'How can you kill him when he is a person who stays awake the whole night and recites the whole *Qur'aan* in one single *raka'h*'?"¹³²

¹²⁹at-Tabaraanee, *al-Awsat*; *Tabaqaat ibn Sa'd*, 3/350. al-Haythamee said in *al-Mujamma'* that the narrators of this *hadeeth* are those of the *saheeh* narrations.

¹³⁰*Tabaqaat ibn Sa'd*, 3/286; Ibnul-Jawzee, *Manaaqib `Omar*, p.169.

¹³¹Maalik, *al-Muwatta'*, 1/119; Ibnul-Jawzee, *Manaaqib `Omar*, p.169.

¹³²at-Tabaraanee, *al-Kabeer*, no.130; Abu Nu'aym, *Hilyatul-Awliyaa'*, 1/57; Ibn Abee Shaybah, *al-Musannaf*, 1/56, 98. Al-Haythamee said in *al-Mujamma'* that the *isnaad* of this report is good (*hasan*).

Ruhaimah said, "`Uthmaan used to fast all the time and used to stay awake the whole night in prayer, except for a short time after *`Ishaa'*."¹³³

`Uthmaan ؓ considered the recitation of the *Qur'aan* in prayers to be better than offering plenty of *ruku'* and *sujood*, and many people have reported that he used to recite the whole *Qur'aan* in one single *raka'h*.¹³⁴

`Abdur-Rahmaan ibn `Uthmaan reported, "One night I was praying when someone touched me on my back. I saw that it was `Uthmaan, the leader of the believers. I made space for him and then he started to pray. He recited the whole *Qur'aan* in one single *raka'h* and then came out of prayer. I said to him, 'But you have prayed only one *raka'h*.' "That is my *Witr* prayer," he said."¹³⁵

6. `Ali ibn Abee Taalib ؓ, the rightly guided khaleefah, the son-in-law of the Prophet ﷺ, the Judge of the Ummah and the hero of Islaam:

Al-Ashtar reported that one night he went to `Ali late at night and found him praying. "O leader of the believers!" asked al-Ashtar. "You fast during the day and you pray at night after a long and tiring day?" `Ali replied, "The journey towards the Hereafter is very long and it has to be cut short by travelling at night."¹³⁶

¹³³*Hilyatul-Awliyaa'*, 1/56; Ibn Abee Shaibah, *al-Musannaf*, 2/271.

¹³⁴*Musannaf `Abdur-Razzaaq*, 3/354; *Sunan al-Baihaqee*, 2/396; Ibn Hazm, *al-Muhallaa*, 3/53; al-Mughnee, 1/494, 2/174; *Kashful-Ghummah*, 1/102, 114; Ibn Abee Shaibah, *al-Musannaf*, 1/99.

¹³⁵*Sunan al-Baihaqee*, 3/25; Abu Nu'aym, *Hilyatul-Awliyaa'*, 1/56.

¹³⁶Ibn Rajab al-Hanbalee, *al-Mahajjah fee Sayrid-Duljah*, pp. 66.67.

7. `Abdullaah ibn `Omar Abu `Abdur-Rahmaan al-Quraishee ؓ:

`Abdullaah ibn `Omar, the son of `Omar ibnul-Khattaab ؓ, was a great leader who used to pray so often and in such a way as to attract people's attention and fill them with admiration.

`Abdullaah ibn `Omar ؓ narrated, "In the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ people used to inform the Prophet ﷺ of any dream that they used to see. I had always wanted to see a dream so that I could ask the Prophet ﷺ to interpret it. I was young and unmarried so I used to sleep in the mosque in the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ. So one night I dreamt that two angels were carrying me towards the Fire which was built all round like a built well and had two poles in it. I saw people around the Fire whom I recognised and I said three times: I seek refuge with Allaah from the Fire. Then, another angel met the first two angels and addressed me and said, 'You will not be harmed.' I related this dream to Hafsah (my sister and the Prophet's wife) who later related it to the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Abdullaah is a good man. I wish he prayed at night.' Saalim, `Abdullaah's father, said that `Abdullaah hardly slept at night after that dream."¹³⁷

There are also many other narrations that inform us of Ibn `Omar's prayer at night:

Naafi` narrated that Ibn `Omar ؓ used to stay awake the whole night in prayer and then he would ask: "O Naafi`! Are these the last hours of the night yet?" If dawn had not arrived, he would continue to pray and then ask again, "O Naafi`! Are these the last hours of the night yet?" If the answer was in the

¹³⁷al-Bukhaaree, *at-Tahajjud*, no.1121-1122; Muslim, *Fadaa'ilus-Sahaabah*, no.2479.

affirmative, he would sit down and engage in supplications and asking Allaah's forgiveness until dawn.¹³⁸

Ibn `Awf reported from Muhammad saying: "Ibn `Omar would pray whenever he woke up at night."

Abu Ghaalib, the servant of Khaalid ibn `Abdullaah said, "Ibn `Omar used to come to see us in Makkah, and he would wake up for *tahajjud* prayers. One night he said to me: 'O Abu Ghaalib! Why don't you stand and pray and recite even one third of the *Qur'aan*?' 'It is almost dawn time; how can I recite one third of the *Qur'aan*?' I asked. He said, 'Suratul-Ikhlaas (that is, *surah* no. 112) is equivalent to one third of the *Qur'aan*.'¹³⁹

Muhammad ibn Zaid narrated, "Ibn `Omar (RA) used to have a mortar for water. At night, he would pray as much as he could and then he would go to bed and take a nap. Then he would wake up, make ablution and start praying again. He would repeat this routine throughout the night four or five times."¹⁴⁰

Naafi` said, "Ibn `Omar used to pray between *Dhuhr* and *Asr* prayers."¹⁴¹ He also said that whenever Ibn `Omar missed *Ishaa'* prayer in congregation, he would stay awake the whole night in prayer.¹⁴²

¹³⁸*a-Isaabah*, 1/349; *Hilyatul-Awliyyaa'*, 1/303; *Siyyaru 'Alaamin-Nubalaa'*, 3/235.

¹³⁹*Hilyatul-Awliyyaa'*, 1/304.

¹⁴⁰*Siyyaru A'laamin-Nubalaa'* (3/215) and *al-Isaabah* (1/340).

¹⁴¹*Siyyaru A'laamin-Nubalaa'*, (3/235); *Hilyatul-Awliyyaa'*, (1/304).

¹⁴²*Siyyaru A'laamin-Nubalaa'*, (3/235) and *Hilyatul-Awliyyaa'*, (1/303-304).

8. `Abdullaah ibn `Abbaas ؓ: the scholar of this *ummah*, the great commentator of the *Qur'aan*, and the cousin of the Prophet ﷺ.

Ibn `Abbas lived the early part of his life under the guardianship of the Prophet ﷺ and observed how he prayed and feared *Allaah*. Afterward, he became a very close companion of `Omar ibnul-Khattaab and learned a great deal from him. It is no wonder that he developed a great love for *Allaah* and for worship. Those who saw him and spent some time with him described how devout and God-fearing he was.

`Abdullaah ibn Abee Maleekah said, "I travelled with Ibn `Abbaas from Makkah to Madeenah and observed that whenever he got off anywhere, he would offer two *rak'ah*. At night, he would stand up and pray for half the night, reciting the *Qur'aan* with great deliberation, glorifying *Allaah* and sobbing."¹⁴³

Ibn Abee Maleekah also said: "I travelled with ibn `Abbaas from Makkah to Madeenah. Whenever he got off, he would pray for half the night. Ayyub asked Ibn Abee Maleekah, 'How was his recitation?'. He said, 'He would recite the verse **"And the stupor of death will come in truth: This is what you have been avoiding!"** *Surah Qaaf* (50):19), and kept repeating it and glorifying *Allaah*."¹⁴⁴

9. Tameem ad-Daaree ؓ

Muhammad ibn Seereen said that Tameem ad-Daaree used to recite the whole *Qur'aan* in one *raka'h*.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³*Siyyaru A`laamin-Nubalaa*, (3/352); *Safwatus-Safwah*, (1/755).

¹⁴⁴*Siyyaru A`laamin-Nubalaa*, (3/342); *Hilyatul-Awliyyaa*, (1/327).

¹⁴⁵*Siyyaru A`laamin-Nubalaa*, (2/445); *Tahdheeb ibn `Asaakir*, (3/359); al-Haythamee, *al-Fathul-Mubeen*, p.108.

Marooq said, "A person from Makkah told me: 'This is the position of Tameem ad-Daaree: He prayed one night reciting the verse **"Or do those who earn evil deeds think that We shall hold them equal with those who believe and do righteous good deeds?"** (*Surah al-Jaathiyaah* 45: 21). He kept repeating it and crying."¹⁴⁶

10. Abu Hamzah Anas ibn Maalik al-Ansaaree: the servant of the Prophet ﷺ

Thumaamah said, "Anas used to pray so much so that his feet would start to bleed as a result of standing for a long time in prayer."¹⁴⁷

11. Abu Hurairah ؓ, the great narrator of *hadeeth*.

Abu `Uthmaan an-Nahdee said, "I invited Abu Hurairah seven times. He would take turns with his wife and his slave to pray throughout the night. When one of them prayed, he would wake up another. And if the other had prayed he would wake up the other. I asked him, 'O Abu Hurairah, how do you fast?' 'I fast three days at the beginning of every month,' he replied."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶*Siyyaru A`laamin-Nubalaa*, 445; at-Tabaraanee, no. 1250; al-`Asqalaanee ascribes it in *al-Isaabah* to al-Baghawee in *aj-Ja`diyyat*.

¹⁴⁷*Siyyaru A`laamin-Nubalaa*, 3/400.

¹⁴⁸*Siyyaru A`laamin-Nubalaa*, 2/609; *Hilyatul-Awliyyaa*, 1/382; Ibn `Asaakir, *at-Taareekh*, 19/122/2; *al-Haafidh* al-`Asqalaanee, *al-Isaabah*, 4/207; *Tadkhiratul-Huffaadh*, 1/36; Ahmad, *al-Musnad*, 2/353.

Abu Hurairah said about himself: "I divide the night into three parts: I sleep in the first part, pray in the second one and try to remember the *ahaadeeth* of the Prophet ﷺ in the third."¹⁴⁹

12. Saalim maulaa Abu Hudhaifah ﷺ, the noted reciter of the *Qur'aan*.

`Aa'ishah ﷺ said, "One day the Prophet ﷺ waited a long time for me. When I arrived, he asked me, 'Why are you late?'. I said, 'I heard someone reciting the *Qur'aan* in the mosque in the best voice that I have ever heard before'. So he put on his cloak and went to listen. When he found that it was Saalim maulaa Abu Hudhaifah he ﷺ said: 'All praise is due to *Allaah* for placing in my *ummah* someone like you.'"¹⁵⁰

13. `Abdullaah ibnuz-Zubair ibnul-`Awwaam ﷺ, the son of Abu `Abdullaah, the cousin of the Prophet ﷺ.

Ibnul-Munkadir said, "If you saw Ibnuz-Zubair praying you would think that he was a branch of a tree that the wind was flapping even though heavy stones from the catapult were thrown around him (that is, when he was under seige)."¹⁵¹

`Amr ibn Deenaar said, "Ibnuz-Zubair was praying even though the stones from the catapult were being thrown

¹⁴⁹ad-Daarimee, *as-Sunan*, 1/82.

¹⁵⁰al-Haakim, *al-Mustadrak*, 3/226 who categorised the *hadeeth* as *saheeh*. adh-Dhahabee approved this; Ahmad, *al-Musnad*, 6/165; Abu Nu`aim, *Hilyatul-Awliyyaa*, 1/371; Ibnul-Atheer, *Ussul-Ghaabah*, 2/308; Siyyaru A`laamin-Nubalaa', 1/168. The narrators of the *hadeeth* are trustworthy, and its *isnaad* is *Saheeh* (authentic).

¹⁵¹*Hilyatul-Awliyyaa*, 1/335; Siyyaru A`laamin-Nubalaa', 3/369.

(that is, when he was besieged) and he did not even turn his face."¹⁵²

`Omar ibn Qais said that his mother went to Ibnuz-Zubair's house and found him praying. Suddenly a snake jumped onto his son Haashim, and people started saying, "The snake, the snake!" and managed to kill it. All this happened and Ibnuz-Zubair did not leave his prayers.¹⁵³

Thaabit al-Bannaanee said, "I went past Ibnuz-Zubair while he was praying behind *al-Maqaam* (Ibraaheem's station during *Hajj*) and noticed that he was standing in prayer like an erect piece of wood which does not move."¹⁵⁴

Mujaahid said, "When Ibnuz-Zubair stood in prayer he would look like a [still] stick." He also said that Abu Bakr ﷺ was like that as well.¹⁵⁵

Asmaa', the daughter of Abu Bakr ﷺ said that Ibnuz-Zubair ﷺ used to fast during the day and pray at night and was known as the "Pigeon of the mosque."¹⁵⁶

14. Tameem ibn Usaid, Abu Rifaa`ah al-`Adawee ﷺ.

Hameed ibn Hilaal said, "Abu Rifaa`ah used to say: 'I have never left *Surah al-Baqarah* ever since the Prophet ﷺ taught me it. I have gathered with that *Surah*, everything that

¹⁵²*Siyyaru A`laamin-Nubalaa'*, 3/369.

¹⁵³*Siyyaru A`laamin-Nubalaa'*, 3/370; Tahdheeb ibn `Asaakir, 7/401.

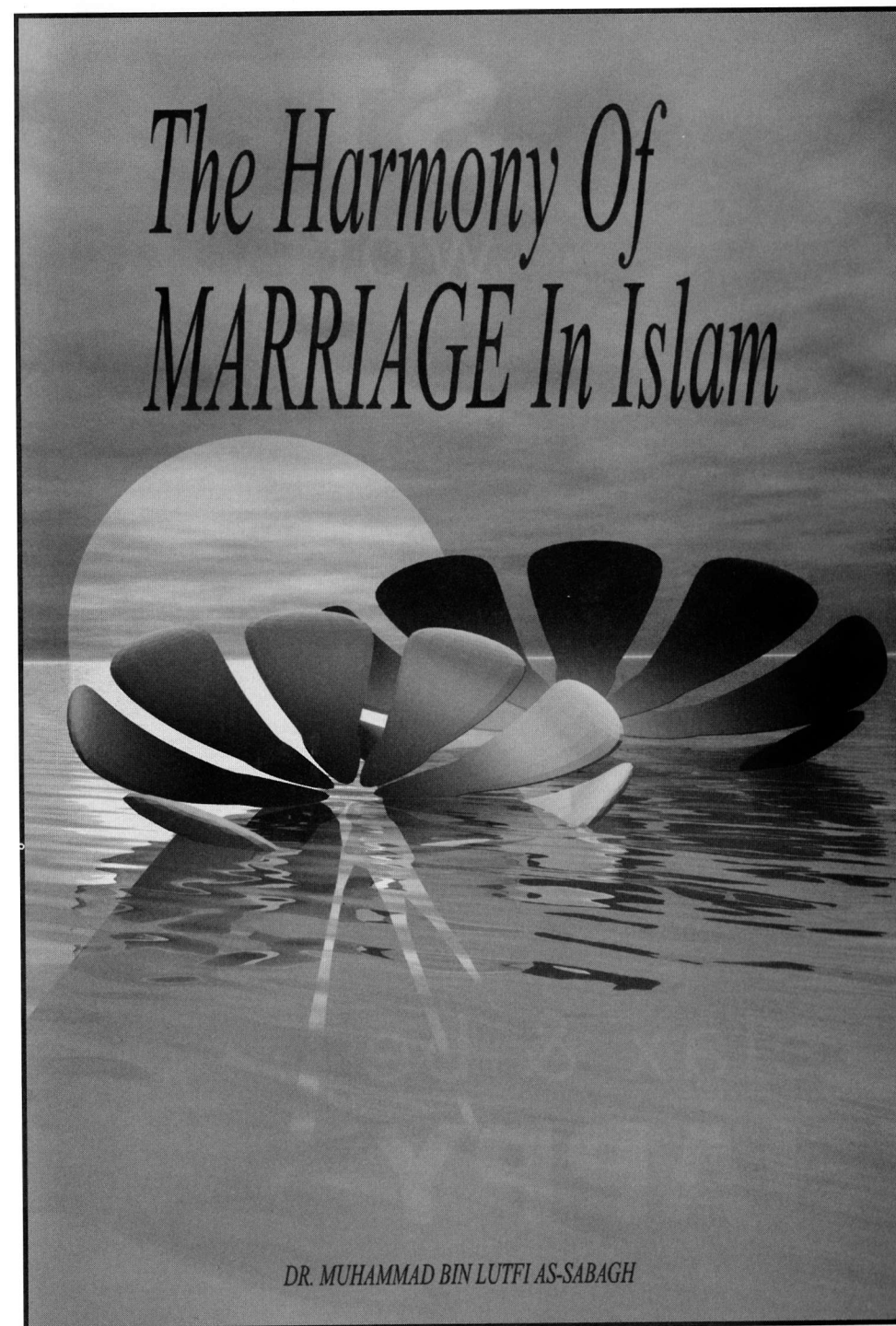
¹⁵⁴*Siyyaru A`laamin-Nubalaa'*, 3/369.

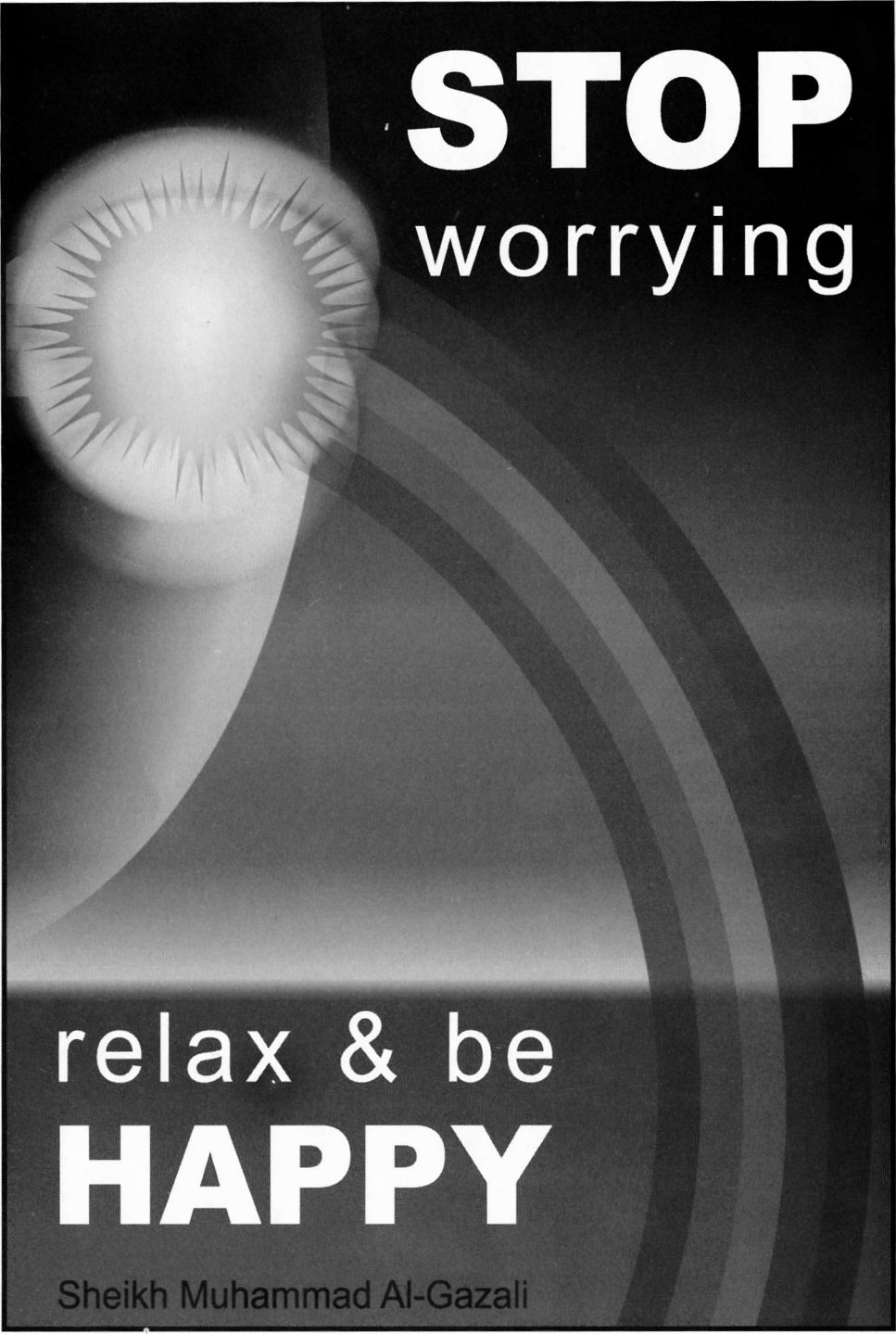
¹⁵⁵*Siyyaru A`laamin-Nubalaa'*, 3/368-369; *Hilyatul-Awliyyaa*, 1/335.

¹⁵⁶*Hilyatul-Awliyyaa*, 1/335; *Siyyaru A`laamin-Nubalaa'*, 3/367.

I have gathered with the *Qur'aan*. My back has never ached me due to praying at night."¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ *Siyyaru A`laamin-Nubalaa'*, 3/15; Ibn Sa`d, *at-Tabaqat*, 7/69. The narrators of the *hadeeth* are known to be trustworthy.



An abstract graphic design on a black background. In the upper left, there is a bright, glowing circle with radiating lines, resembling a sun or a light source. Below and to the right of this circle are several concentric, semi-circular arcs in varying shades of gray, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall composition is minimalist and modern.

STOP
worrying

relax & be
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Al-Firduos Ltd., London

ISBN 1-874263-07-8



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